

# Digital Media Literacy in Samin Indigenous People

Turnomo Rahardjo<sup>1</sup>, Hapsari D. Sulistyani<sup>1</sup>, Taufik Suprihatini<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Communication, Universitas Diponegoro, Semarang, Indonesia,

**Abstract.** As an ethnic group, Samin community has values and rules that differ to the dominant Indonesian culture. Negative stereotypes that are embedded in the word of Samin has made the community prefer to be called as Sedulur Sikep. In Baturejo village, a village that has a large number of Sedulur Sikep, the monograph data shows that 70.74 percent of the population does not attend junior high school. The data indicates that many members of the population do not fully participate in formal education. On the other hand, the data also signifies that the community has in a way exposed to an outside (formal) mode of education particularly at the level of elementary school. The similar phenomenon also occurs in the terms of digital media. Some of the Sikep community have consumed mass media, even though the way they perceive mass media differ to that of the dominant culture. Thus, it is necessary to conduct a media literacy education to Sikep society including digital media literacy. The media education have to be adapted to local thinking and understanding of the media's contents. The result of media literacy observation indicates that, while still maintaining its cultural values, Sikep community does not become completely exclusive to digital media exposures. Communication activities that are using mobile phones can be found in their daily lives. They also interact with those who have different cultural backgrounds with them. The mobile phone has become a relatively prominent gadget in the society. Therefore, the Sikep community is vulnerable to the various contents of messages offered by the media.

Keywords: **media literacy, ethnic group, minority, digital literacy, socialization**

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia has thousands of islands around 17,000 islands. Because there are so many islands, Indonesia has various ethnicity. But not all ethnic groups can be reached with the media. This is affected by the surrounding environment and geography. Indonesia has a diverse geographical environment there are still many areas in Indonesia that have not been achieved by technology and media. Because they keep their culture and nature. This paper focus on media literacy education in Sikep (Samin) ethnic group. The convergence of media technologies enable the media users to instantly establish interaction. However, most often the digital media users are still lack of communication competencies. Consequently, in terms of digital media, people's communicating behaviors tend to be more reactive than proactive. Many people do not have the ability to perceive media contents critically. Communication is not just how messages are exchanged between one parties to another, but communication requires particular practical skills and ethical sensitivity. In terms of digital media literacy, there are two basic principles in communication that must be considered. First, communication is not simple. This principle signifies that everyone needs the ability to

communicate appropriately and effectively. Second, communication is influenced by ethics. Communication involves ethical considerations in the dichotomy of good-bad, right-wrong, and responsible-irresponsible. Interaction is expected to be done honestly, respecting each other's rights and being responsible for the actions taken.

The media accessibility, especially internet-based and mobile devices, has a direct impact on the users. The immediacy nature of new media has changed the perception of time and space. The new media penetrates all aspects in social life. The new media exposure has surpass the geographic boundaries including urban and rural areas, the boundaries of different levels of education, and even stretching the age limit of the audiences[1]. The effects of new media, especially the new media in the form of smart phones and mobile gadgets, change the pattern of social behaviors. New media contents also influence the mindset, orientation, attitude, and behavior of media users. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of media consumption, it is necessary to conduct the socialization of media literacy and digital literacy. The two terms refer to a process in generating the media users who are able to use new media critically and consume various media contents consciously. Conceptually,

\* Corresponding author: [taufik\\_fspkom@yahoo.com](mailto:taufik_fspkom@yahoo.com)

Potter[1] mentions that there are more than twenty definitions of media literacy. In general, it can be said that the definitions of media literacy that are put forward by individuals or a group of media researcher indicate the importance of media literacy. Media literacy encourages the emergence of critical thinking from the community towards the contents presented by the media. On the other hands, media literacy also evokes the ability to communicate mindfully in all forms of media, be more proactive than reactive in understanding media contents.

## 2 Methodology

The method used in this research is qualitative, where the data were collected using library data collection techniques and documentation studies. Baran[2] defines media literacy as an inherent skill within us or as something given (taken for granted). However, like any other skills, the skill of media literacy can be improved. If we assess the importance of mass media in creating cultures and defining our lives, then media literacy skills should continuously be enriched. Devito[3] defines media literacy as the ability to understand, analyze, and produce mass communication messages (television, film, music, radio, billboards, advertising, public relations, newspapers and magazines, books, websites and blogs, newsgroups and chatrooms). Devito argues media literacy is a form of empowerment because it can help the media users to use the media wisely; the users will be able to understand, analyze, and evaluate media messages properly. Media literacy also enables the users to create positive and empowering messages by using social media mindfully.

Thus, media literacy is an instrument for educating how to use media including new media in society. Both adults and children in every community are vulnerable to the negative effect media messages. They need to be educated on how to control their media consumption behaviors. Based on the considerations of media effects, the minority community including Sikep community is also vulnerable to the negative effects of the media. Therefore, it is important to look at media consumption in the area of Sikep community particularly on how the children use the new media gadgets. The result of the analysis will provide the data for implementing the socialization of digital media literacy in Sikep community in particular Baturejo Village, Sukolilo District, Pati Regency.

Sikep community is a group of people who have unique cultural characteristics that are still maintained and practiced in their everyday life. Sikep has a specific perspective on how they live their lives. They have special rules about marriage, work, and education. The rules and perspectives of Sikep community on education are different to the perspective of the formal education. The differences has made the participation of Baturejo's residents in formal education relatively low. The monograph data shows that 70.74 percent of the population does not go to junior high school. These conditions indicate that many people in the population do not attend to formal education. On the other hand, the data

also indicates a slight openness to the concept formal education. Even though they still interpret formal education in the context of their local educational values, some of the parents sent their children to formal education (in particular at the level elementary school). The similar phenomenon also occurs in the media context. Some of the Sikep community members has consumed mass media and internet-mediated communication. Based on this phenomenon, it is necessary to conduct media education to Sikep community which is already exposed by mass and social media. The media education will, of course, be adapted to local interpretation and understanding of the mass media.

## 3 Discussion

While still maintaining its cultural values, Sikep society is not completely secluded. They interact with those who have different cultural backgrounds. Some of them use mobile phone in their daily lives. Therefore, in a way the Sikep community is also vulnerable to the exposure of various contents offered by the media. The presence of new internet-based media through the use of smart phones, tablets, and other internet-based gadgets, has evoked a serious impact on people's cognition and behavior, including the Sikep community group members. In view of the excess effects that may arise from the inappropriate use of this new medium, it is necessary to understand the media penetration in Sikep community.

According to Potter[1], the activities of media literacy relate to three main issues: the media, the meaning of literacy, and the purpose of media literacy. There are different point of views in looking at the first issue (the media). Some perspectives emphasize only on one media (for example television or computer), other views pay attention to one of the media categories (for example print or broadcast), and other perspectives focus on all forms of information-sharing activity. The different views of interpreting the media also emerge in the second issue (the meaning of literacy). Some thoughts understand media literacy in the context of skill enhancement. Other perspectives emphasize on the efforts of building knowledge, and other standpoints place on integrating skills and knowledge development. In the third issue (the purpose of media literacy), most authors point to this issue by saying that the purpose of media literacy is to improve the lives of individuals. They usually assert the need for controlling the negative effects of media. A number of authors also argue the importance of media literacy to be incorporated in the educational curriculum, while others say that media literacy needs to be manifested in social movements.

Media literacy is a popular topic, not only among academics but also society in general, such as parents, teachers, social activists, and policymakers. Academics develop various thoughts on media literacy. They assert that media literacy should be treated as a public policy issue, a critical cultural issue, a set of pedagogical tools for primary school teachers, parental advice or a topic of scientific study.

This paper focuses on describing the way in which children consume media including mobile phones or gadgets. In other words, the data in this study explain children's media consumption behaviors. The situation analysis of this study was conducted by observing the media consumption behaviors of elementary school children. The findings indicate that the media consumption of children ages 7 to 11 (at the area of Sikep community) has shifted from watching television into consuming internet-based media. However, particularly for children who are a part of Samin community, even though some of them are already exposed by the new media, the community still use television as the main source of entertainment and information. Based on the in-depth interviews with Sikep parents, many of them do not perceive television as a harmful media. They do not aware the negative effects of television on their children. Many of them rely on television as the media that educate their children about the situation outside the community. Many Sikep children learn how to write and read from television. The irony is while many researchers argue the negative effect of television, Sikep community uses television as the main source of information and entertainment. In terms of digital media, some children in Sikep community use the digital media to get the reference about the lifestyle trend from the outside of the community particularly fashion. This study using interpersonal communication to evoke the awareness about the potential negative effect of television and digital media. The interpersonal communications to the parents in Sikep community create the awareness about the negative effect of media. The interpersonal communication method of socialization is prominent in connecting with Sikep community due to its unique cultural characteristics.

This study also conducted in-depth interviews in school environment (students, teachers). The interviews signify that there is a tendency of excessive use of gadgets by students including the students from Sikep community. The digital media literacy socialization, then, was conducted for raising the awareness about the negative effect of media. Hopefully, the awareness will motivate the students to consume the media selectively and use the gadgets wisely. The socialization was conducted in a school that has students from the Sikep community. The main target of the socialization was students and teachers. The important step of socialization was creating multimedia materials that covered: the basic rules of using media gadgets, teaching material on media literacy, and the restrictive guidance in consuming the media. After socialization, focus group discussions were conducted for teachers and students. The result of focus group discussions signified that both the teachers and the students aware about the ideal duration of daily gadget usage, and also recognize the classification of media content rating system. Because this is an early step of digital media literacy, the success indicator of this activity is the awareness of students and teachers in SDN Baturejo, Sukolilo Subdistrict, Pati Regency about the various risks (physically, mentally, and socially) of excessive use of media gadgets (mobile phones, smartphones, tablets). Furthermore, another success

indicator of digital media literacy socialization is the way in which the teachers participate in controlling the use of gadgets in order to reduce the potential negative risks of excessive use of gadgets. The teachers then become the agent of change by incorporating digital media literacy discussions in their teaching materials.

## 4 Conclusion

The digital media literacy socialization in this study is still in the early stages. Therefore, the main aim of the socialization is evoking awareness about the risks of excessive use of gadgets. Interpersonal approaches were used for evoking the awareness about the negative effects of television and new media particularly for parents that are a part of Sikep community. The adoption of new behaviors takes a relatively long time. Therefore, in terms of adopting digital literacy behaviors, the socialization program still requires a series of activities that focus on the positive attitude toward the proper use of media gadgets and selecting the appropriate media contents. The socialization also emphasizes on how to enjoy, understand, and give appreciation to media content. Media literacy does not lead to overly critical behaviors or the perspective that always look at media contents as negative (the damaging effects, cultural degradation). Learning to enjoy, understand, and appreciate media content is an indication of the media user's competency in comprehending various forms of media content. The final step of the socialization is establishing digital literacy education as a social movement.

## References

1. J. W. Potter. in William F. Eadie (ed.), *21st Century Communication A Reference Handbook*, Volume 2, Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc (2009).
2. S. J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication*, Sixth Edition, New York, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc (2010).
3. J. A. Devito, *Essentials of Human Communication*, Sixth Edition, Boston, Pearson Education, Inc. (2008)
4. M. A. Mujib, *Pandangan Hukum Islam Terhadap Pernikahan Tunggal Medayoh*, Semarang, UIN Walisongo, (2014).
5. T. Rahardjo, *Membangun Model Komunikasi Masyarakat Multiagama*, Pengabdian DIPA Undip, 2016 (2016).
6. M. Rosyid, *Perkawinan Masyarakat Sikep dalam Pandangan Hukum Negara*, *Jurnal Analisa*, Volume XVII, No. 01, Januari - Juni 2010 (2010).